

HISTORY OF HAT CREEK CHURCH
CAMPBELL COUNTY, VIRGINIA

BY

WILLIAM IRVIN

1854



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A SKETCH OF THE HISTORY OF
HAT CREEK CHURCH
From 1742 - 1854
By William Irvin

From copy made by J. A. Scott, Pastor of Hat Creek Church, October 23, 1882, and copied on typewriter by Annis I. Clark, November, 1932.

Something About Old Hat Creek in Campbell County, Virginia

A Presbyterian man, whose name was John Irvin, was the one who had the first meeting house built at Hat Creek. But before saying more concerning it, it will be proper to show how the way was opened for the building of it--and to proceed, this man, Mr. Irvin, being a native of Ireland, as well as his consort (whose name previous to marriage was Mary Boyd) shortly after having married took shipping and came over to America and settled in Pennsylvania. After having lived there for twenty years and more, it was much talked of that in Virginia there was much valuable and unoccupied land. And it struck the mind of Mr. Irvin that it might be to his interest to part from his land in Pennsylvania for money and come here to Virginia where he could get land without money and without price. And he did; and settled himself and family in a mile of the place where Hat Creek is, and took up all the land now lying within its vicinity.

And when he came here there was no family of mortals living in thirty-five or forty miles of the place. But on others hearing of Mr. Irvin settling himself here, and of the likelihood of making out well here to live, they began to flock hither around him; so that the neighborhood of Hat Creek soon became replete with men, women and children. And thus the way was opened and prepared for the building of Hat Creek.

Mr. Irvin while engaged in his domestick affairs endeavoring to do the best possible for himself and family at his new residence, did not forget religion and that there was no meeting house within many miles of him. And like David of old he set himself to find "a place for the Lord, an habitation for the Mighty God of Jacob." Yea, he was resolved to have a meeting house built for the gospel to be preached in. And he, getting some few men to join him (being of the Presbyterian persuasion) succeeded in having a large log meeting house built, and named it Hat Creek after the name of a little stream which was near by. And Mr. Irvin gave as his part of pay for the building a parcel of land lying on the other side of the stream from the meeting house--land he had taken up on coming to Virginia. And this was the principal part of what was paid for it. The house was completed about three years after Mr. Irvin had come to Virginia, or

20. *Phragmites australis* (Cav.) Trin. ex Steud.

in other words about the year 1742, so that it has been one hundred and twelve years since the first meeting house was built at Hat Creek.

Now, before Mr. Irvin had left Pennsylvania it was agreed upon between him and the well known Gilbert Tennant that after Mr. Irvin had settled in Virginia, if he found himself scarce of preachers, for him (Mr. Tennant) to come to Virginia at the place where he (Mr. Irvin) had settled, and preach awhile, to give the people a start. And upon the meeting house being completed Mr. Irvin wrote to Mr. Tennant that he might come on,--that a meeting house was ready for him--that no preacher could be come at here. And Mr. Tennant, true to what had been agreed upon between Mr. Irvin and himself, came on to Virginia and boarded in the house of Mr. Irvin for twelve months. And during this time he preached at Hat Creek, as a supply for the people, almost every Sabbath, besides preaching about and about on some other days of the week, elsewhere. And at times, when he would not be preaching, he would amuse himself in being out shooting deer, and killed one after another of these wild animals.

Mr. Tennant was much esteemed as a preacher at Hat Creek. His mind, it has been said, seemed much set upon his work, and upon doing good what time he stayed among the people here. And during the time of his stay he organized and started a church at Hat Creek, which, like the little cloud mentioned in the Bible, waxed bigger and bigger. So that by the time his twelve months had expired a respectable little church had sprung up at Hat Creek to serve the Lord. But as relates to the first ordained elders in the church at Hat Creek it can only be said that Mr. Irvin was one of the first that was ordained. And it seems reasonable to suppose that the men, or some of them, who had joined Mr. Irvin in building Hat Creek, were the others, whoever they were, but their names are entirely unknown at the present day.

Mr. Tennant's twelve months having expired, he took leave of Hat Creek, lighted up with hopes and prayers for its prosperity, and returned to Pennsylvania. And when he was about to leave--his leaving, as has been said, made not only members of the church, but some who were no members weep and cry,--weep and cry to see Hat Creek's first preacher leave Hat Creek, and then after Mr. Tennant left Hat Creek the church remained for a season without any stated supply; yet travelling preachers now and then called by and preached. One is here instanced in particular. A young man, who had just entered the ministry, called by and preached. After having finished his discourse, there came up a shower of rain, which for awhile detained the people. And while the shower lasted he rose up and had something more to say. When the shower was over and the company breaking up, the young man as if uneasy about his day's performance, whispered in Mr. Irvin's ear, "How did you like?" Mr. Irvin's response was, "Young man let me tell you, when you are done quat!" This was as good as telling him he had as well have let alone adding what he did while the shower lasted. And this response made the young preacher startle and look as if electrified.

At length the elders of Hat Creek procured another preacher as a stated supply for the people, next to Mr. Tennant, and the same was Mr. Waddell. And an eloquent one he was. It was said forty years back that of all the preachers who had preached at Hat Creek none was so much of an orator as Mr. Waddell was. Under his edifying and instructive preaching the church sat for a term of years and prospered. And generally he had many hearers. From accounts he certainly did much good within the walls of Hat Creek. But the time came for him to leave, being called off elsewhere.

But the elders of the church soon procured another as a stated supply to fill up his place; and his name was David Rice. And his name is known in all the churches and held in veneration. This servant of the Lord preached at Hat Creek for a number of years and manifestly did much good among the people; and at times had very crowded meetings, especially at times when Sacrament was to be administered. At one of his fall Sacraments when wine could not be procured, he sent to the woods for grapes, and had the juice squeezed out of them to be the wine to be used; and said that it was the juice of the grape of the vine, and that was sufficient--that it was not necessary for it to ferment before it would answer for sacramental purposes. At length, Mr. Rice, like a bird of passage, took flight to some other region--moved to Kentucky and there ended his days.

The next Presbyterian minister who preached as stated supply at Hat Creek was one William Mahon, and others, Cary Allen, William Irvin (son of the forementioned J. Irvin) and James Mitchell. All of whom bore an active part in keeping Hat Creek lighted up with the sound of the Gospel. And the probability is that Mr. Mahon was the first of these four ministers there. And it is said he served out two terms preaching there. But presently he left here and moved to Kentucky. Cary Allen preached at Hat Creek but for a short while. It has been said his greatest sermon there was from these three words, "Mene - Tekel - Upharsin." When he ceased preaching at Hat Creek he left these parts for a new place of abode, and died soon afterwards. William Irvin likewise preached at Hat Creek only for a short while, and then moved to Albemarle, and settled himself there, and preached for the most part at a place called Cove meeting house, what time he lived.

James Mitchell's term of preaching at Hat Creek was somewhat longer than Cary Allen's, or William Irvin's. But his voice is now no more to be heard in the churches on earth.

Next will be related some things which occurred in days ere the last of the aforementioned preachers ceased at Hat Creek--and to proceed.

In those days the second meeting house was built which was a framed one; yet the year in which it was built is now unknown.

Mr. Irvin gave, as his part of pay for the building, a parcel of land lying on this side the Hat Creek stream, next the meeting house, reserving only a few acres for the benefit of the church, which belong to it--to the present day. At the time this second meeting house was built, the church at Hat Creek had become pretty well replenished with members. And at this time the eldership of the church consisted of the forementioned John Irvin, Major John Irvin (his son), Captain John Marshall, Captain Charles Cobbs, Captain Publius Jones, and Joshua Morris--all being men of integrity, and good report, and active in the church. And there were some active members too in the church at this time (as well as there has been ever since) though not elders. Among whom was one Samuel Morris, who was once reported to have been an elder. But creditable information has been given that he was never an elder at Hat Creek--only an active member. Truly from the commencement of Hat Creek even till now, Jesus the Good Shepherd has kept some active ones--some fine sheep at this place.

And let it be related that the elders of Hat Creek at the time the second meeting house was built were (as well as elders there have been since) very friendly and generous towards preachers of other denominations, and permitted such of them to preach there as were of good standing and good report in their own churches,--provided they so managed as not to interfere with days of preaching occupied by Presbyterians. Yet at the same time they were very watchful if any of them acted inconsistent with the profession of religion. Among those permitted to preach there, as instance is here given of one as follows, (viz): One William Dodson, of the Baptist denomination, was permitted to preach there. And after having preached there a while, he took a trip over the mountains. And after he had returned, he preached at Hat Creek on the Sabbath following; and in his sermon told of what a great revival had taken place under his preaching over the mountains; what large numbers he had baptized by immersion, adding that he had soon to go thither again. In order to know as to the certainty and particulars of Dodson's revival, Mr. Mitchell wrote to his father-in-law, David Rice, who at that time was over the mountains, about the same place where Dodson said he had been. Word was written back by Mr. Rice that Dodson had been there, but that no revival at all had occurred under his preaching while there; and that an individual was all he had baptized. On hearing this news, as well as some other things rumored about Dodson, the next time he preached at Hat Creek Mr. Irvin betook himself thither; stepped into the meeting house, and said, "Dodson, gan your ways out of that pilpat!" And then, as his manner was, he straightened himself up, threw his hands behind at his back, and made toward the door to go out. Dodson "ganed his ways out of that pilpat." But ere Mr. Irvin could get out at the meeting house foot, he caused him to hear his voice saying, "there is the publick road--you cannot make me 'gan my ways out of that'". When Mr. Irvin stepped into the meeting house and said what he did, some that were present were smitten with astonishment, and thought Mr. Irvin had done wrong for once, if he had never done so before. But when they had learned the true grounds for all this, they could not blame him,--could not

blame him for not permitting one to preach there any longer who spake not the truth to his neighbors, nor led a sober and continent life. The most of the people present went home, and what few went out to the public road to hear Dodson, heard but little before they were dismissed.

It had not been long after this till the wolf broke in upon the sheep at Hat Creek. Dodson was pleased to rob the church of five of its members, to help to pay, no doubt, for Mr. Irvin's saying, "Dodson, gan your ways out of that pilpat," for he persuaded Elder Charles Cobbs and his sons, John and Jesse, and daughter Mary, to take water. And they went down into the water and Dodson put them under it. And Elder Charles afterwards became a Baptist preacher. But let it be observed that he did not get the wife out at the same time he did the others. She seemed for awhile determined to remain where she was. But presently he persuaded her to come out, and take water. He would not have missed one so distinguished as she was, on any consideration. When he put her under the water he had it so contrived as for it to be done away in the dead hours of the night, by light of torches on the banks of Little Falling River, in which he put her under the water. All this (by interpretation) was done with a view to give a shock to the minds of those remaining at Hat Creek about the great importance of baptism by immersion, and lead them to think that if so distinguished an one as Mrs. Cobbs was could not wait till daylight to go down into the water, others could not fly to the water too hastily. Yet none of his schemes had such an effect as to deprive Hat Creek of any more of its members, as much aimed at as it was. For it is said that from the time he heard the words: "Dodson, gan your ways out of that pilpat," it seemed to be his very aim to leave Hat Creek empty, swept and garnished, if possible. He missed his aim entirely. And although he deprived the church of the five members mentioned, God was able to bring others in their room and did it. So that the heavenly Shepherd still kept a fine flock at Hat Creek to hear his voice and follow him in ways of righteousness. And even after Dodson had put under the water Mrs. Cobbs, and she had become a member of the Baptist church, that did not break her up from Hat Creek, at last, for it is a fact that she regularly attended preaching there, and communed at the table of the Lord there, just as she had ever done. And for communing there the Baptists had her up before them. But they could do nothing with her--could not handle her in conversation so well as they desired. They said, "We will just let her alone. We do not think the sister will do so again." But the sister did so again:- yea, again and again. Sometime afterwards they had her once before them. In her defence, she said in their presence, "She was told that the table at Hat Creek was the table of the Lord; and that, if she were a saint of the Lord and Presbyterians saints of the Lord, she could not see what harm there would be in a saint of the Lord communing with saints of the Lord at the table of the Lord! She also said that saints hold communion and fellowship with each other in heaven, and that she could not see how it could be right for them to do so, and at the same time wrong for saints to hold communion and fellowship with each other on earth." They had just to let her alone

without her ever hearing the sentence of excommunication pronounced against her. And she communed at Hat Creek as long as she lived; so that she was as good an one among them there, after Dodson had got her to go down into the water as she had been before. And when she died, the voice of several denominations of professors was that she had died in the Lord, and that her works had followed her.

Thus some things have been related which occurred in days before the last of the aforementioned ministers had ceased at Hat Creek. And it must be related too, that before the last of them had ceased there, it pleased the Lord to remove Elder Irvin from the church and the world. And this took place not very long after the second meeting house had been built, and about the year 1788, or 1789. And now that Elder Irvin was dead, and Elder Cobbs had gone to the Baptists, the eldership at Hat Creek was reduced to number four, viz: Major John Irvin, Captain Marshall, Captain Jones, and Joshua Morris. And faithful were these men in the church. With the utmost diligence did they attend to all the affairs, and concerns thereof, even as Elder Irvin had done before them. After the last of the Presbyterian ministers, as before named, had left Hat Creek, the church had to get along the best they could, under the preaching of ministers of different denominations, until another Presbyterian preacher could be procured. Among those who preached was one Bishop Moore, a Methodist, and him the people of Hat Creek very well admired. And let it be observed that during this interval Elder Morris died leaving Major Irvin, Captain Marshall and Captain Jones, as then being the only elders. At length about the year 1798 or 1799, another preacher was procured as stated supply for Hat Creek, and behold the same was old Archibald McRoberts, with a head as bald as an eagle. And he did roar at Hat Creek, depend upon it! roar it, like a lion roaring after the prey! And it was no little good that he did there by his roaring. For the writer has known some, who are doubtless now in heaven, that attribute their souls' conversion to his roaring at Hat Creek, as the only means of it. But while preaching there he had sometimes to encounter with interruptions by an old outlandish negro woman, who stood at the southern end of the meeting house with hands stretched out towards him, exclaiming, "Gody, Gody, Lordy, Lordy!" Sometimes she was put out of doors, but still her interrupting voice could be heard out there. The ministrations of Mr. McRoberts at Hat Creek seldom failed of being numerously attended. It seemed the people of all denominations were drawn out toward him. All liked to hear him roar! - but still as well as they liked it, he sometimes wearied them by being too lengthy. A woman once said, "If ever old Dr. McRoberts gets me on my knees again, he will have to work for it!" - being so lengthy in prayer.

Each time the old man came up to preach he had a most faithful waiting man who would meet him at church, shake hands heartily with him, take him off his horse, tie the horse and sometimes conduct him to the meeting house door, and while preaching brought him fresh water to quench his thirst. The great attention he paid to the old man attracted in a high degree the notice of every one present.

This faithful waiting man was a negro man, who lived in the neighborhood of Hat Creek, by the name of Miles. His lips curled over more than lips were ever known to curl,--and went with pocket handkerchief hanging out nearly to the ground, and was counted the greatest curiosity of a negro living. Mr. McRoberts thanked him from the heart for the attentions he paid him; but could not thank him for being so much a liar as he was; for he once followed Mr. McRoberts to the house of Major Irvin to wait upon him there, and on the next day he told his Miss Jinney that they had a little sacrament at Major Irvin's the other night,--and that they could not get any wine and had "sassafras tea" (as he pronounced it!) instead of wine and that Mr. McRoberts got him to carry the sassafras tea around to the folks that took sacrament. On this being told Mr. McRoberts the next time he came up to preach he could not forbear laughing heartily--lie as it was. Indeed nobody could forbear laughing heartily at lies so curious as he could tell. During the year that Mr. McRoberts preached at Hat Creek, others now and then stepped in and preached there too. Sometimes James Tompkins, after he joined the Presbyterian Church, would come down from Old Concord and preach there. And John Weatherford, of the Baptist Church, took a spell at preaching there. Mr. McRoberts in preaching at Hat Creek preached only in Spring, Summer and Autumn,--leaving out the Winter. And this he continued to do till in the Spring of 1806. Then it was he preached his last sermon at Hat Creek, and in the same year he died:--if not the same, in the forepart of the year following; and when he wound up at Hat Creek the elders of the Church were the same as when he commenced; namely: Major Irvin, Captain Marshall, and Captain Jones. After the voice of Mr. McRoberts could be no more heard at Hat Creek the church had once more to remain for a while without any stated Presbyterian supply.

Yet meanwhile the people had preaching there by first one and then another. And in the summer of 1807, John H. Rice came up from Charlotte and preached there as many times as twice. And the writer is happy to state that his preaching there was doubtless blessed in the conversion of a brother of his, whose name was James H. Irvin. Mr. Rice would not return home till he had pressed it on the elders to send to the next Presbytery with a petition in hand to furnish supplies for Hat Creek. Elder Captain Jones was sent on, and supplies promised. And in the summer of 1808 one Mr. Lumpkin (being one of them) appeared at Hat Creek and preached just one sermon. But this was not all the preaching done at Hat Creek in the same year, for Clement Read of Charlotte came up in the same year and preached as many as three or four times. In the year 1808 there was no preaching there at all by Presbyterians till in the Fall of the same year. At which time Nash LeGrand had come about in these parts, and preached there. And from that time he became the stated supply for Hat Creek. And much indeed was he beliked. No one among the people could be heard to speak lightly of him; but all spoke of him in the highest terms. His labors at Hat Creek were unquestionably highly blessed, and that to the conversion of souls. It has been said that Rev. William Hamersly attributes his conversion to his labors at Hat Creek, as the outer means of it for the

most part. One new member, and then another, and sometimes several at once joined the church at Hat Creek, while his time lasted there. On sacramental occasions he never preached alone, but had assistants, among whom John H. Rice and Clement Read may be mentioned in particular. During his time at Hat Creek, and in 1810 or 1811, the third meeting house was built at that place, which like unto the second was a framed one. Before the building was completed Elder Captain Jones died, and it became necessary that the number of elders should be increased--the number being reduced to only Major Irvin and Captain Marshall. And Paulett Clark, Captain William Smith, Benjamin Chapman, and William Armistead were then chosen and ordained elders, all being men well approved of. But in the year following, William Armistead died. Mr. LeGrand continued as a supply for Hat Creek till some time in 1814, in which year, on 15th of January, Major Irvin, one of the elders, died. And his funeral sermon was the last sermon Mr. LeGrand preached at Hat Creek, and himself died shortly afterwards in Nelson County. While his time lasted at Hat Creek occasionally preaching was done by others; so that when the people could not hear Mr. LeGrand they could hear them.

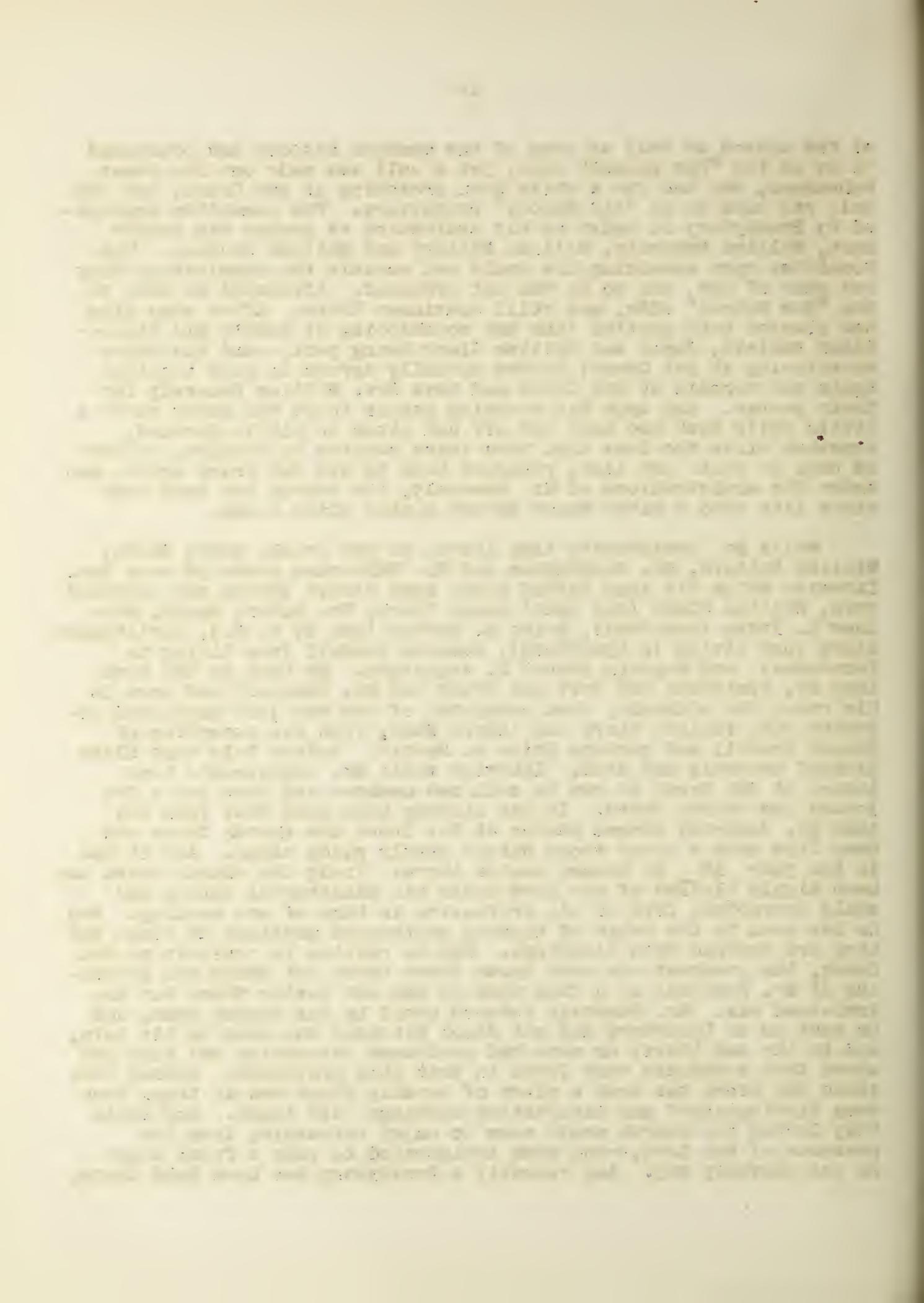
Now before Mr. LeGrand had left Hat Creek, and before Major Irvin had died, John S. McLean had come about. And Mr. LeGrand took a very active part towards his becoming his successor at Hat Creek. And verily he did. The church chose him and in the latter part of the Summer of the aforementioned year, 1814, a Presbytery was held at Hat Creek and he was ordained pastor of the church at that place, in which Presbytery were to be seen Drury Lacy, Matthew Lyle, Mr. LeGrand, William S. Read, and Clement Read, among others of the ministry. When Mr. McLean set in at Hat Creek, for years afterward he was considerably approved of, and under his ministrations things went on tolerably well in the church, and the church seemed edified and lighted up, and every now and then could be seen new members flying to it, "as doves to their windows." But in five or six years after he had become pastor of Hat Creek, or about the year 1820 or 1821, he broke off, and took a trip to Philadelphia as a student of medicine. At this some of the church were to be seen shaking their heads, and did not seem so lighted up as formerly. At length Mr. McLean's pastoral relation to the church was dissolved, yet he continued to preach at Hat Creek for a while afterward, and while his time there lasted Mr. Mitchell would come down sometimes from Bedford and preach there, and James Hurt of the Baptist Church and Nathaniel Lovelace of said church commenced preaching there for a while, and upon the winding up of Mr. McLean's time there, Mr. Jo Cochran stepped in and preached awhile there. Also while his time lasted there the eldership was renewed, Elder Captain Smith and Elder Chapman having moved far away, and Elder Marshall having departed this life. The following three were chosen and ordained in their stead, namely: Richard Hamersly (now dead), John W. Marshall (now of L. Concord), and Andrew Mann (now moved away), so that the eldership at the time that Mr. McLean left consisted of these three, together with Paulett Clark. Now even before Mr. McLean had wound up at Hat Creek the question was going the rounds, who is to be

Hat Creek's next pastor? And so soon as Mr. McLean had finally ceased at Hat Creek, Samuel Armistead proferred to become pastor there as his successor. And sometime after that he held a meeting at Hat Creek, and the votes of the church were taken as to his becoming or not becoming pastor of the church at that place. The most of the members gave their votes in favor of it; the others were much opposed to it, yet showed their opposition more afterwards. Everything upon the whole, had gone on smoothly before at Hat Creek, and with harmony and concord among the brethren. Now it was that a number was in favor of a man and a number opposed to the same man. A hot contention now began, which might have been suppressed had but the one party yielded to the hearts' desire of the other. Yea, a contention now begun, though an apostle had written, "My brethren, these things ought not so to be." Amidst the contention a call was made out for Mr. Armistead, and sent on to Presbytery, and soon afterward Stephen Taylor, who had been appointed by Presbytery, preached at Hat Creek his installation sermon and he became pastor there next to Mr. McLean. And this, if remembered correctly, was in the year 1826; but still after Mr. Armistead had become pastor, the opposing party could not quietly rest and be contented. And in process of time bitter complaints were carried to Presbytery, and Presbytery appointed committees to visit Hat Creek and try to settle matters there; and lastly appointed one to visit that church and examine into the state of the church, and try to make a final settlement of matters at that place. The committee consisted of Dr. John H. Rice (as he was now called), Clement Read, William S. Read, and probably Henry Smith, for he was among them. The Committee, on hearing statements on both sides, and on mature consideration, cut off the opposing party (being a minority) and gave the same to Little Concord. After the Committee had made this division of the church at Hat Creek, both parties declared themselves entirely satisfied, and thus matters all rested till about the time the controversy burst out in the Presbyterian Church throughout the United States, and the appellation of "Old School," "New School" was heard pronounced. Then it was that another hot contention took place at Hat Creek among those who were left of being given to Little Concord. Mr. Armistead and some of the church took sides with the "New School" and others with the "Old School." And consequently the most of those of the "Old School" were opposed to Mr. Armistead remaining pastor any longer. Several members immediately withdrew from the church. Mr. Armistead appearing determined still to remain as pastor and things seeming to be out of proper order at Hat Creek, a fine train of members (but still a minority) withdrew next, and worshipped at a place called Rudds Old Store, and had it in contemplation to build for themselves a new meeting house. And while they worshipped there Mr. Cunningham preached statedly to them as a supply.

In these days the church had arrived at a pitiable ebb. And it seemed as if Hat Creek's day was about to be over. Mr. Armistead at last concluded to have his pastoral relation to the church at Hat Creek done away. And it was done away. And though the most

of the elders as well as some of the members besides had professed to be on the "New School" side, yet a call was made out for James McDearman, who had for a while been preaching at Hat Creek, and the call was sent to an "Old School" Presbytery. The committee appointed by Presbytery in order to his ordination as pastor was Andrew Hart, William Hamersly, William Pollard and Matthew Jackson. The Committee upon examining him could not sustain the examination they had made of him, and so he was not ordained. Afterward he went to the "New School" side, and still continues there. After some time had elapsed both parties (the one worshipping at Rudd's Old Store--Elder Paulett, James and William Clark being part,--and the other worshipping at Hat Creek) became mutually agreed to come together again and worship at Hat Creek and have Rev. William Hamersly for their pastor. And upon his becoming pastor there the party which a little while back had been cut off and given to Little Concord, somewhat alike the Jews that were taken captive to Babylon, returned back to their own land, returned back to Old Hat Creek again, and under the ministrations of Mr. Hamersly, the church has been ever since like unto a river whose waters gently glide along.

While Mr. Armistead's time lasted at Hat Creek, Henry Smith, William Pollard, Mr. Cunningham and Mr. McDearman preached some too. Likewise while his time lasted there some elders chosen and ordained were, William Clark (now dead) James Clark, Dr. Robert Smith, Matthew L. Irvin (now dead), Brice A. Martin (now of N. S.), Christopher Clark (now living in Lynchburg), Sampson Woodall (now living in Tennessee), and Captain Robert A. Armistead. So that by the time that Mr. Armistead had left Hat Creek and Mr. Hamersly had come in his room, the eldership then consisted of the men just mentioned together with Paulett Clark and Andrew Mann, with the exception of Samuel Woodall and perhaps Brice A. Martin. Before this time Elder Richard Hamersly had died. Likewise while Mr. Armistead's time lasted at Hat Creek it can be said new members and that not a few joined the church there. It has already been said that from the time Mr. Hamersly became pastor at Hat Creek the church there had been like unto a river whose waters gently glide along. And it was in the year 1818 he became pastor there. Truly the church there has been highly blessed of the Lord under his ministerial labors and souls converted, five or six professing in time of one meeting. And he has been in the habit of holding protracted meetings at times and they are crowned with blessings. But as relates to revivals at Hat Creek, the greatest one ever known there burst out under the preaching of Mr. Hamersly at a time when he was not pastor there but Mr. Armistead was. Mr. Hamersly labored until he was broken down, and he sent on to Lynchburg and got Jacob Mitchell who came to his help, and in the end thirty or more had professed conversion and time has shown that soundness went forth in what they professed. Indeed ever since Hat Creek has been a place of worship there has at times been some distinguished and interesting meetings held there. And while they lasted the church would seem to enjoy refreshing from the presence of the Lord,--and seem invigorated to take a fresh start in the heavenly way. And recently a Presbytery has been held there,



and it was so interesting a meeting as that the church would be at no little expense to have another. And old Elder Paulett Clark, who is upwards of 83 years old, and on the confines of eternity, and soon must launch away, and who has been faithful at church as well as at home, would rejoice and be exceeding glad to see once more the ministers who were present at that time,--especially to see Dr. Rice, and if not him some one of the ministers at Hampden Sidney sent by him to see him in his room. And ere he could enter in at the door of his house would readily exclaim, "Come in thou blessed of the Lord! Wherefore standest thou without?" Verily this Presbytery or meeting, though past, is yet reviving to the church at Hat Creek, when thoughts of it strike the mind. And let it be said the membership of Hat Creek have generally been very attentive to their meetings--would have the mind set upon them and would not slight them. And at sacramental and other distinguished meetings they would carry to church food enough for themselves and those who came from afar. So that foreigners on leaving the church for home would leave it well pleased and having respect for all its members. And the number at Hat Creek are at present a goodly number. But as well as elsewhere, the divine will has had to be resigned to its members dying, moving away, or being dismissed. Yet new members would be added to it in their room. From the Baptists none has ever joined there except one young lady. From the Methodists seven or eight have joined there. But not from other sects. And none (?) from other denominations have communed there at the Table of the Lord except Methodists and Episcopalians. And one instance only has there been of a married couple the one being a member at Hat Creek and the other a member of a different church. The husband was a Baptist and the wife a Presbyterian at Hat Creek. He would not join her church, and she would not join his, and yet they lived quite agreeably together what time the wife lived.

Mention has been made of the names of some who have preached sermons at Hat Creek, besides the particular Presbyterian ministers who have preached there either as stated supplies or in the capacity of pastors. Mention will be made now of the names of some others of the several denominations, who have preached sermons there in the writer's remembrance, viz:

Presbyterians - Dr. Benjamin H. Rice, Dr. J. H. Rice, Dr. Jesse Armistead, Rev. Wilson, Henry Smith, Samuel Watkins, Drury Lacy, Matthew Lyle, Andrew Hart, Samuel L. Price, Anderson, Bradstreet, Caldwell, Alexander Hogshead, and brother, Jackson (from Ireland), Carlile, Davidson, Brice H. Martin, Norval Howe, Rice, Stickley, McElaine, Leach, and Matthew Jackson, who has since Mr. Hamersly has been pastor at Hat Creek preached there some years statedly. And with him the people have seemed very well pleased, and with his published sermons on Baptism.

Baptists - Edmund Johns, Richard Dabbs, Kerr, E. Roach, Jenkins, Gabriel Walker, Philip Hurt, and Robert, his son,

Philip Mathews, Saunders, Mustines, Charles Cobbs,
Allison, John Félder, Fleshman, Todd, _____
Davidson.

Methodists - Rev. John Chapple, Beighbors, Pendleton,
Obediah Edge, Richard Brown, Thomas Jones, Hozell, Clark,
P. E. M. Comer, John Robinson, and Mr. Urgood, an Episcopalian.

Some others besides these have preached at Hat Creek in the writer's remembrance, but their names at present are disremembered by him. Indeed the minds of all denominations of professors have seemed to be drawn out and directed to Hat Creek, as if they begrudged it to its true occupiers. Once, upon obtaining leave, the Baptists had a camp meeting there. And this was in the Fall of 1804. And once upon obtaining leave, they held an association there. And this was in the Fall of 1806. And once it seemed as if a Mr. H of the Methodist denomination wanted to take Hat Creek away, if he could. But presently he vanished and was not seen there since. Upon giving the names of the foregoing ministers who have preached at Hat Creek, it would, no doubt, be gratifying to the mind to know the names of all that have been members of the church there from its start. To give a list of their names would be a task not to be fulfilled. The present number of members at that place is _____. This number, owing to deaths, removals, and dismissions, is not so great as the number has been there at some other times. Yet it is, as is elsewhere said, a goodly number. And best of all, as there is reason to conclude, clothed in robes of righteousness and garments of salvation. One of this number, O. C. Clark, has been chosen and ordained Elder since Mr. Hamersly has been its pastor. And the said O. C. Clark, together with his father, Paulett Clark, Dr. Robert Smith, Captain Robert Armistead, and James Clark compose the present eldership at Hat Creek.

But it is time to be saying something about Sabbath Schools. Sabbath Schools began at Hat Creek thirty years back, and with the exception of a few years have been kept up there ever since. And no little good and benefit have emanated from them. In them children have learned well, and acquired such information as no one should go without. And some years back the Union Questions found their way into the Sabbath School at the place. And the members of the school have performed well in studying out and learning correct answers to them. Of one little girl it was said, "If Matthew Henry were to rise from the dead, he could not exceed her in answering the questions correctly." It is hoped Sabbath Schools are not to die away at Hat Creek, since they have unquestionably been blessed.

But it is time to be saying something about the fourth meeting house and the grave-yard. Recently the fourth meeting house has been built at Hat Creek, which like unto the second and third is a framed one--and one which was more costly than any of the former. The grave-yard too has recently been enclosed, after having been enclosed three or four times before. And ever since Hat Creek has

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been a place of worship this has been a place for burying the dead. The ground first set apart for the grave-yard, in process of time, became so filled up with the bodies of the dead that about the year 1825 it was found necessary to enlarge it and it was enlarged with land procured from the owner of the land adjoining it. it is to be regretted that in burying the dead at this place that there was not some kind of monument erected to each grave, to show that a grave was there and whose. For the want of monuments some have to go without knowing the exact spot where their kindred lies--only know they are buried at Hat Creek. Graves are so worn down there that it would seem to one there is no grave where one is. Not to venture a conjecture of the number of bodies buried at Hat Creek, let it suffice to say many bodies of the dead lie in the dust of the earth there,--bodies both of white and black, male and female, old and young, and of all sizes. And when the first Resurrection rolls around surely a goodly number of the bodies of the saints will be seen rising there. "Blessed and holy are they that have part in the first resurrection, for on such the second death hath no power."

But it is time to come to a close, the writer will say, were he to prophesy, he would prophesy that Hat Creek will be a place where Jehovah is worshipped till Jesus comes. He guesses it will be thus:- who would doubt that Hat Creek is a part of the heritage of the Lord, purchased with the Redeemer's blood? The writer, whenever he thinks of this old church of the Lord, feels constrained to compare it to some venerable old man to whom much honor should be paid. It has been thought by some that Hat Creek has been much underrated by other churches. If so, perhaps some contentions which have been there might have given rise to it. But notwithstanding some contentions Hat Creek has been an interesting church from its beginning hitherto.

Indeed it seems that there the Lord has made the horn of David to bud; and ordained a lamp for the anointed. While it stands written in the book of Psalms, "Of Zion it shall be said that this and that man was born in her" - let it stand written of old Hat Creek it may be said this and that man, and woman, and juvenile soul was born there--born again. Verily, verily, the Lord has blessed old Hat Creek with blessings from the skies. And, O, may he continue to bless it, till Gabriel stand with one foot on the earth and the other on the sea, and swear with uplifted hands to Heaven, till time shall be no more!

And now, dear old Hat Creek, while ceasing to speak of thee for the present, the writer will say: "Peace be within thy walls and prosperity within thee."

This is a copy of a sketch of the History of Hat Creek Church made by William Irvin for Rev. Benjamin H. Rice, D. C., but never forwarded to him. It was written in 1854.

The original was, after I had taken with my own hand this copy in full, sent to Rev. Benjamin Smith, D. C., of the Union Theological Seminary, Virginia, that he might have a copy taken for Union Theological Seminary, and then send the original M. S. to the Presbyterian Historical Society Building for preservation.

J. A. Scott,

Pastor Hat Creek Church,

October 23, 1882.

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